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Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

A Tillyloss Scandal

J. M. Barrie

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A TILLYLOSS SCANDAL

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH WE APPROACH HAGGART, HAT IN HAND.

According to those who have thought the thing over, it would defy the face of clay to set forth this prodigious affair of Tillyloss, the upshot of which was that Tammas Haggart became a humorist. It happened so far back as the Long Year, so called by reason of disease in the potato crop; and doubtless the house, which still stands, derides romance to those who cavil at an outside stair. Furthermore, the many who only knew Haggart in his later years, whether personally or through written matter or from Thrums folk who have traveled, will not readily admit that he may once have been an every-day man. There is also against me the vexing practice of the farmer of Look-aboutyou, who never passes Tillyloss, if there is a friend of mine within earshot, without saying:

“Gravestane or no gravestane, Tammas Haggart would have been a humorist.”

Lookaboutyou thus implies that he knew Haggart for a man of parts when the rest of us were blind, and it is tantalizing beyond ordinary to see his word accepted in this matter by people who would not pay him for a drill of potatoes without first stepping it to make sure of the length.

I have it from Tammas Haggart that until the extraordinary incident occurred which I propose telling as he dropped it into my mouth, he was such a man as myself. True, he was occasionally persuaded by persons of Lookaboutyou's stamp to gloss over this admission, as incredible on the face of it, but that was in his last years, when he had become something of a show, and was in a puzzle about himself. Of the several reasons he gave me in proof of a non-humorous period in his life the following seem worthy of especial attention:—

First, that for some years after his marriage he had never thought of himself as more nicely put together than other men. He could not say for certain whether he had ever thought of himself at all, his loom taking up so much of his time.

Second, that Chirsty was able to aggravate him by saying that if which was which she would have married James Pitbladdo.

Third, that he was held of little account by the neighbors, who spoke of his living "above Lunan's shoppy," but never localized the shop as "below Haggart's house."

Fourth, that while on his wanderings he experienced certain novel and singular sensations in his inside, which were probably his humor trying to force a passage.

Fifth, that in the great scene which ended his wanderings, his humor burst its banks like a dam, and had flowed in burns ever since.

During nearly forty years we contrived now and again to harness Tammass to his story, but often he would stop at the difficulty of realizing the man he must have been in his pre-humorous days, and remark, in his sarcastic way, that the one Haggart could not fathom the other. Thus our questionings sometimes ended in silence, when we all looked in trouble at the fire and then went home. As for starting him on the story when he was not in the vein, it was like breasting the brae against a high wind.

When the events happened I was only a lad. I cannot send my mind back to the time when I could pass Haggart without the side-glance nearly all Thrums offered to his reputation,

and he is best pictured hunkering at Tillyloss, one of the row of his admirers. After eight o'clock it was the pleasant custom of the weavers to sit in the open against a house or dyke, their knees near their chins and their ears ready for Haggart. Then his face would be contracted in pain as some strange idea bothered him and he searched for its humorous aspect. Perhaps ten minutes afterwards his face would expand, he would slap his knees, and we knew that the struggle was over. It was one of his ways, disliked at the time, yet admired on reflection, not to take us into the secret of his laughter; but he usually ended by looking whimsically in the direction of the burying-ground, when we were perfectly aware of the source of the joke, and those of us nudged each other who were not scared. Until the spell was broken we might sit thus for the space of a quarter of an hour, none speaking, yet in the completest sympathy, because we were all thinking of the same thing, and that a gravestone.

Tillyloss is three broken rows of houses in the east end of Thrums, with gardens between them, nearly every one of which used to contain a pig-sty. There are other ways of getting into the gardens than by windows, for those

who are sharp at knowing a gate when it looks like something else. Three or four other houses stand in odd corners, blocking the narrow road, which dodges through Tillyloss like a hunted animal. Starting from the west end of the suburb, as Tillyloss will be called as soon as we can say the word without smirking, the road climbs straight from the highway to the uppermost row, where it runs against a two-story house. Here we leave it as many a curious stranger has done, to get out of Tillyloss the best way it can, for that two-storied house is where Tammas Haggart lived, up the otherside stair, the west room.

Tammas flitted to the Tenements a year after he became a humorist, and it is an extraordinary tribute to his memory that the road from the pump up to his old residence in Tillyloss is still called Haggart's Roady. Many persons have inhabited his room since he left it, but though the younger ones hold out for an individuality of their own, the graybeards still allow that it is Haggart's house. To this day Tillyloss residents asked for a landmark to their dwellings may reply:

"I'm sax houses south frae Haggart's," or
"Onybody can point out Haggart's stair to

you. Ay, weel, gang to that, and then come back three doors."

The entrance to Lunan's shop was beneath Haggart's stair, which provided a handy retiring place in wet weather. Lunan's personality had the enormous advantage of a start of Tammas's, as has been seen, yet Haggart has practically swallowed Lunan, who in his more crabbed age scowled at the sightseers that came to look at the second story of the house and ignored the shop. As boys we envied, more than learning, the companion whose father kept a shop, and I remember Lunan's son going with his fists for the banker's son who—though he never really believed it—said that his father could have a shop if he liked. Yet the grand romance of Haggart choked the fame of Lunan even with the lads who played dumps at Tillyloss, and the shop came to be localized as "beneath Haggart's stair." Even Lunan's stoutness, which was a landmark in itself, could not save him. The passage between his counter and the wall was so narrow and the rest of his shop so full of goods that before customers could enter Lunan had to come out, but in this quandary his dignity never left him. He always declined to join the company who might be listening on the stair to Tammas's adven-

tures, but some say he was not above hearkening through a hole in one of the steps.

The exact date of Haggart's departure cannot be determined, though it was certainly in the back end of the year 1834. He had then been married to Chirsty a little short of three years. His age would be something beyond thirty, but he never knew his birthday, and I have heard him say that one of the few things he could not understand was how the relatives of a person deceased could know the precise age to send to the newspapers.

What is, however, known for certain is that Tammas's adventures began within a week of the burial of old Mr. Yuill, the parish minister. There had been a to-do about who should preach the funeral sermon, two ministers having words over it, and all Thrums knowing that Mr. Yuill had left seven pounds to the preacher. At this time Haggart did not belong to the Auld Lights, nor was he even regular in his attendance at the parish church, but the dispute about the funeral sermon interested him greatly, and when he heard that the session was meeting to decide the affair, he agreed with Chirsty that he might do worse than hang around the door on the chance of getting early information.

There was a small crowd at the door on the same errand, all of whom noticed, though they little thought it would give him a topic to their dying day, that Haggart had on his topcoat. It had been an old one of Mr. Yuill's, presented to Tammas, who could not fill it, but refused to have it altered, out of respect to the minister's memory. It has also been fondly recalled of Tammas that he was only shaven on the one side, as if Chirsty had sent him to the meeting in a hurry, and that he had not the look of a man who was that very night to enter upon experiences which would confound the world.

"It was an impressive spectacle," Snecky Hobart said subsequently, "to see Tammas discussing the burial sermon, just as keen as me and T'nowhead, and then to think that within twenty-four hours the very ministers themselves would be discussing him."

"He said to me it had been a dowie day," T'nowhead always remembered.

"He shoved me when he was crushing in nearer the door," was Hender Robbie's boast.

"But he took a snuff out of my mull."

"Maybe he did, but I was the last he spoke

to. He said, 'Well, Dan'l, I'll be stepping back to Tilly.' "

"Ay, but I passed him at the Tenements, and he says, 'Davit,' he says, and I says, 'Tammas.' "

"Very like; but I was carrying a ging of water frae Susie Linn's pump, and Tammas said would I give him a drink, the which I did."

"Lads, I'm no sure but what I noticed a far-away look in Tammas's face, as if there was something on his mind."

"If ye did, Jeames, ye kept it to yourself'."

"Ay, but I meant to mention it when I got hame."

"How did ye no, then?"

"How does a body no do many a thing? I dinna say I noticed the look, but just that I'm no sure but what I noticed it."

So we all did our best to recall Haggart's last words and looks on that amazing evening, even the Auld Licht minister, who cared little for popularity, claiming as a noticeable thing to have walked behind Tammas and observed that his handkerchief was hanging out of his north pocket. But though all these memories have their value as relics, we have Tammas's

own word for it that from the time he reached the session house until his return to Tillyloss he felt much as usual.

"Ay," he would say in his impressive way, "many a thing may happen between the aucht and the ten-o'clock bells, but I told neither T'nowhead nor Snecky nor none of them as onything was to happen that nicht."

"Ye did not, Tammass; na, na, for if ye had I would have heard ye, me being there."

"Ay, but ye couldna say my reason for no telling ye?"

"Na."

"Weel, then, my reason was just this that I didna ken myself'."

CHAPTER II.

CONTAINING THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED
TO THE DEPARTURE OF HAGGART.

IN the future Haggart's mind was to become a book in which he could turn up any page wanted, but its early stage was a ravel not worth harking back to unless for purposes of comparison. He could never, therefore, when questioned, say for certain that between the session house and Tillyloss he had met a soul except the Auld Licht minister, to see whom was naturally to feel him. At the foot of Tilly, however, he was taken aback to find a carriage and two horses standing.

The sight knocked all the news he had heard about the funeral sermon out of his head, and left him with just sufficient sense to put his back to the wall and assume the appearance of a man who would begin to think directly. First he gazed at the horses, and said,

"Ay."

Then he looked less carefully at the coachman.

"Yes," he said.

Lastly, he gave both eyes to the carriage, and corroborated his previous remarks with, "Umpha."

In themselves these statements suggest little, though they really left Haggart master of the situation. The first was his own answer to the question, "Will these be Balribbie's beasts?" and the second was merely a stepping-stone to the third, which was a short way of saying that the ladies had called on Chirsty at last.

Tammas's wife, Chirsty, had been a servant at Balribbie, the mistress of which had promised, as most of Thrums was aware, to call on her some day.

"Ye'll be none the better though she does call," Haggart used to say, to which Chirsty's inhuman answer was,

"Maybe no; but it'll make every other woman in Tillyloss miserable."

Every day for a year Chirsty awaited the coming of the ladies, after which it was the neighbors who spoke of the promised visit rather than herself. But evidently the ladies had come after all, and the question for Tammas was whether to face them or step

about Tilly until they had driven away. It is difficult, no doubt, to believe that there ever was a time when Haggart would rather have hidden behind a dyke than converse with the gentry, but I have this from himself. He, whose greatest topic in the future was to be, Women, and Why we should Put up with Them, however Unreasonable, could not think of the proper thing to say to the ladies of Balribbie.

"Losh, losh," he has said, when casting his mind back to this period, "it's hard to me to believe that the unhumorous man swithering at the foot of Tilly that nicht was really Tammas Haggart, and no just somebody dressed up in Tammas Haggart's image."

If it was hard to Tammas, how much harder to the like of us.

Witho it actually deciding to show tail, Tammas continued to lean heavily against the wall, where he was not conspicuous to two women who passed a little later with baskets on their arms.

"I assure ye Chirsty's landed," one of them said, "for she has her grand folk after all."

"Ay," said the other, "and Tammas is no in, so she'll no need to explain how her man's

so lang and thin by what he was when she exhibited him at Balribbie."

"What do ye mean, ye limmers?" cried Haggart, stepping into sight. "I was never at Balribbie."

They slipped past him giggling, with the parting shots—

"Chirsty can tell ye what we mean," and
"And so can Jeames Pitbladdo."

Haggart probably sent his under lip over the upper one, for that was his way when troubled. He was aware that Chirsty had very nearly married Pitbladdo, but these women meant something else. Without knowing that he was doing so, he marched straight for his house, and was half-way up the outside stair when the door opened, and two ladies, accompanied by Chirsty, came out. Haggart did not even know what they were like, though he was to become such an authority on the female face and figure. He stopped, wanting the courage to go on and the discourtesy to turn back. So he merely stood politely in their way.

Chirsty gave her curls an angry shake as she saw him, but he had to be acknowledged.

"This is himsel'," she said with the con-

tempt a woman naturally feels for her husband.

Thus cornered, Tammias opened his mouth wide, to have his photograph taken, as it were, by the two ladies. The elder smiled and said, "I am glad to make your acquaintance, James."

Tammias thinks she said more, but could never swear to it. To keep up with her quick way of speaking was a race for him, and at the word "James" he stumbled, as against a stone. When he came to himself,

"Thank ye, mem," he said, "but my name——"

Here Chirsty gave him a look that made him lose his words.

"Let the leddies pass, can ye no?" she exclaimed.

For a moment Tammias did not see how they could pass, unless by returning to the house, when he could follow them and so get rid of himself. Then he had the idea of descending.

"At the same time," he said, picking up the lost words, "my name——"

"Dinna argy bargy with the leddies," said Chirsty, tripping down the stair like a lady

herself, but not hoisting the color that would at that moment have best become her.

"You must come out to Balribbie again and see us, James," the elder lady remarked by way of good-night.

Tammas turned a face of appeal to his other visitor, who had been regarding him curiously.

"Do you know, James," she said, "I would not have recognized you again?"

"Very like," answered Tammas, "for ye never saw me."

"Be ashamed of yourself, James," cried Chirsty, shocked to hear husband of hers contradict a lady.

The young lady, however, only smiled.

"Oh, James," she said, playfully, "to think you have forgotten me, and I poured out your tea that day at Balribbie with my own hand."

In his after years Tammas, tempted to this extent, would have answered in some gallant words such as the young lady could have taken away with her in the carriage. But that night he was only an ordinary man.

"I never set foot in Bal——" he was replying, when Chirsty interfered.

"Well he minds of it," she said, audaciously,

"and no farther back than Monday he says to me, 'That was a cup of tea,' he says, 'as I never tasted the marrows of.'"

"Wuman!" cried Tammas.

"See to the house, James," said Chirsty, "and I'll go as far as the carriage with the ladies."

When Chirsty returned, five minutes afterwards, her husband was standing where she had left him.

"My name, mem," he was saying to the stair, "is not James, but Tammas, and it's gospel I tell ye when I say I was never at Balribbie in my born days."

Chirsty passed him without a word, and went into the house, slamming the door. Tammas and his tantrums did not seriously disturb her, but she had been badly used on her way back from the carriage. While helping the ladies to their seats she had been happily conscious of Kitty Crabb peeping at the proud sight from the back of the doctor's dyke, and as Kitty was the most celebrated gossip in Tillyloss, Chirsty thought to herself, "It'll be through Tilly before bedtime."

"Ay, Kitty," she said, on her way back, look-

ing over the dyke, "that was the Balribbie family calling on me."

Kitty, however, could never stand Chirsty's airs, and saw an opportunity of humbling her.

"I saw nobody," she answered.

"They've been in my house since half nine," cried Chirsty, anxiously, "and that was their carriage."

"I saw no carriage," said Kitty, cruelly.

"I saw ye gaping at it ower the dyke," Chirsty screamed, "and that's it ye hear driving east the road."

"I hear nothing," said Kitty.

"Katrine Crabb," cried Chirsty, "think shame of yourself."

"Na, Chirsty," rejoined Kitty, "ye needna blame me if your grand folk ignore ye."

So Chirsty entered her house with the dread fear that no one would give her the satisfaction of allowing that the Balribbie family had crossed its threshold. She was wringing a duster, as if it were Kitty Crabb, when Tammas stamped up the stair in no mood to offer sympathy.

He kept his bonnet on, more like a visitor than a man in his own house, but as he plumped upon a stool by the fire he flung his

feet against the tongs in a way that showed he required immediate attention.

"I'm waiting," he said, after a pause.

"Take your feet off the fender," replied Chirsty.

"Tell me my name immediately," requested Tammass.

"That's what's troubling ye?"

"It is so. What's my name?"

"Sal, whatever it is, I wish it wasna mine."

"Your grand folk called me James."

"So I noticed."

"How was that?"

"Ye couldna expect the like of them to ken the ins and outs of your name."

"Nane of your tricks, wuman; I wasna born on a Sabbath. It was you that said my name was Jeames; ay, and what's more, ye called me Jeames yoursel'."

"Do ye think I was to conter grand folk like the Balribbie family?"

"Conter here, conter there, I want to bot-tom this. They said I had been at Balribbie."

"Weel, I think ye micht have been glad to take the credit of that."

"It's my opinion," said Tammas, "that ye've been pretending I was Jeames Pitbladdo."

"Ye might have been proud of that, too," retorted Chirsty.

"As sure as death," said Tammas, "if ye dinna clear this up I gang to Balribbie for licht on't."

"She looked me in the face at that," Tammas used to say as he told the story, "and when she saw the mighty determination in it she began to sing small. I pointed to the place whaur I wanted her to stand, and I says, 'Now, then, I'm waiting.'"

"I never pretended to ye," said Chirsty, "but what it was touch and go my no marrying Jeames Pitbladdo."

Tammas nodded.

"The leddies at Balribbie thocht it was him I was to marry."

"I daursay."

"They dinna ken about you at that time."

"They dinna seem to ken about me yet."

"Jeames used to come about Balribbie a heap, and they saw he was after me, and Miss Mary often said to me was I fond of him? Ay, and I said he was daft about me. Then he spiered

me, and after that they had him up to the house."

"So, so, and that was the time he got the tea?"

"It was so, and then I gave up my place, them promising to come and visit me when I was settled."

"Ay, but Jeames creepit off after all."

"Weel ye ken it was his superstitiousness made him give me the go-by."

"I've heard versions of the story frae folk in the toon, but I didna credit them. Ye took guid care never to tell me about it yoursel'. Ye said to me it was you that wouldna have him, no that he wouldna take you."

"He wanted me, but he was always a superstitious man, Jeames Pitbladdo. He was never fonder of me than when we parted."

"All I ken," said Tammas, "is that he wouldna buy the ring to ye, and that must either have been because he didna want ye when it came to the point, or because he was a mighty greedy crittur."

"He's no greedy; and as for no caring for me, it near broke his heart to give me up. There was tears on his face when he parted."

"Havers! what was there to keep him frae buying the ring if he wanted it?"

"His superstitiousness."

"What is there superstitious about a ring?"

"It wasna the ring; it was the hiccup did it."

"Ay, I heard there was a hiccup in the story, but I didna fash about it."

"Jeames did though, and it was a very queery thing, I can tell ye, though I didna put the wecht on it that he did. As many a one kens forby me, he walked straight to Peter Lambie's shop to buy the ring, and just as he his hand on the door he took the hiccup. Ye ken what a superstitious man Jeames is."

"If I wanted a wife it's no hiccup would stand in the road."

"Because you're ower ignorant to be superstitious. And Jeames didna give in at the first try. He was back at the shop the next nicht, and there he took the hiccup again. Then he came to me and said in terrible disappointment as it would be wicked to marry in the face of Providence. I never saw a man so crushed like."

"Ay, I'm no saying but what this may be

true, but it doesna explain your reason for calling me Jeames."

"I call ye Tammas as a rule, when it's necessary to mention your name. Ye canna deny that."

"Tell me how I'm Jeames to the gentry."

"I wasna to disgrace mysel' to them, was I?"

"Whaur's the disgrace in Tammas?"

"Ye maun see, Tammas Haggart, dull as ye are, that it was a trying position for me to be in. When I left Balribbie the leddies thocht I was to marry Jeames Pitbladdo; did they no?"

"I daursay."

"And I had told them Jeames was complete daft about me; and so he was, for he called his very porridge spoon after me, a thing you never did."

"Did I ever pretend to you I had these poetical ways?"

"I wouldna have believed it, though you did. But was ever mortal woman left in sich a predicament because of a superstition? Nat'rally, when I married you, I didna' let on to the Balribbie family as ye wasna' Jeames Pitbladdo,

and Jeames Pitbladdo they think ye to this day. What harm does it do ye?"

"Harm! It leaves me complete mixed up about mysel'. Chirsty Todd, ye have disgraced me this nicht."

Here Chirsty turned on him.

"I've disgraced ye, have I? And wha has shamed me every nicht for years, if no' yersel', Tammag Haggart?"

"In what way have I shamed ye?"

"In many a way, and particularly with what ye say at family worship. Take your feet off that fender."

"I keep my feet on the fender till I hear what new blether this is; ay, and longer if I like."

"The things ye say in the prayer is an insult."

"Canny, Chirsty Todd. That prayer, as weel ye ken, was learned out of a book, the which was lended to me for the purpose by a flying stationer."

"Ye're a puir crittur if ye canna' make up what to say yersel'. Do you think you'll ever be an elder? Not you."

"Wha wants to be an elder?"

"None of your blasphemy, Tammas Haggart."

"What's wrang with the prayer?"

"Gang through it in your head, and you'll soon see that."

Tammas repeated the prayer aloud, but without enlightenment; whereupon Chirsty nearly went the length of shaking him.

"Did ye not pray this minute," she said, "for the heads of this house, and also the children thereof?"

"I did so."

"And have ye no' repeated these words every nicht for near three years?"

"And what about that?"

"Tammas Haggart, have we any bairns? Is there 'children thereof?'"

Tammas used to say that at this point he took his feet off the fender. When he spoke it was thus—

"As sure as death, Chirsty, I never thocht of that."

His intention was to soothe the woman, but the utter unreasonableness of the sex, as he has pointed out, was finely illustrated by the way Chirsty took his explanation.

"Ye never thocht of it!" she exclaimed, "Tammas, you're a most aggravating man."

In his humorous period, Haggart could have stood even this, but that night it was beyond bearing. He jumped to his feet and stumbled to the door.

"Chirsty Todd," he turned to say, slowly and emphatically, "you're a vain tid. But beware, woman, there's others than Jeames Pit-bladdo as can take the hiccup."

Chirsty had strange cause to remember this prophecy, but at the moment it only sent her running to the door. Tammas was half-way down Tillyloss already, but she caught him in the back with this stone:

"Guid-nicht, Jeames!"

With these words the Thrums Odyssey began.

CHAPTER III.

SHOWS HOW HAGGART SAT ON A DYKE
LOOKING AT HIS OWN FUNERAL.

HAGGART must have left Tillyloss with Chirsty heavy on his mind, for an hour afterwards he was surprised to find himself out of Thrums. He was wandering beneath trees alongside the Whunny drain, which is said to have been chiseled from the rocks when men's wages were fourpence a day. Here he sat down, preparatory to turning back. It was now past his usual bedtime, and he had been twelve hours at work that day.

"I canna say whether I sat lang thinking about Chirsty," he afterwards admitted; "but I mind watching a water-rat running out and in among some nettles till it got mixed in my mind with the shuttle of my loom, and by that time I was likely sleeping."

The probability is that Tammas, who met no one, walked west from Tillyloss to Susie Linn's pump, where he took the back wynd and made for the drain edge by the west town end. This is the route we have usually given him—though Lookaboutyou sends him round

by the den—and I have walked it often with Tammas when we were drawing up a sort of map of his wanderings. The last time I did this was in the company of William Byars, who came back to Thrums recently after nearly thirty years' absence, and spoke of Haggart the moment his eyes lighted again on Tillyloss. Those that saw him say that William was overcome with emotion when he gazed at the memorable outside stair, and at last walked away softly saying, "Haggart was a man." What I can say of my own knowledge is that William met me one day as I was coming into Thrums from my schoolhouse and asked me as a favor to go round the "Haggart places" with him. This I mention as showing what a hold the affair we are now tracking took upon the popular mind.

I pointed out to William the very spot on which Tammas fell asleep. The drain edge path crossed the burn at that time by a foot-bridge of stone, and climbed a paling into the Long Parks of Auchtersmellie. A hoarding has been erected on this bridge to make travelers go another way, but it is also as good as a sign-post, for ten yards due south from it stands the short thick beech against which Tammas Haggart undoubtedly slept for nearly

seven hours on that queer night. Even Look-aboutyou admits this.

To make the scene as vivid as possible, William, at my suggestion, sat down beneath the tree like one sleeping. I then went a little way into the Long Parks and came back hurriedly, making pretense that it was a dark night. I climbed the paling, crossed the bridge—there being two loose spars in the hoarding—and was passing on when suddenly I saw a man sleeping at the foot of a tree. When regarding him I shivered, as if it was the depth of winter, and then noted that he had on a thick top-coat. After a little hesitation, I raised him cautiously and got the coat off without wakening him. I was rushing off with it when I remembered that the night was cold for him as well as for me, and flung my old coat down beside him. Then I hurried off, but of course came back directly, the make-believe being over.

Something very like this happened while Haggart was asleep, though no human eye witnessed the scene. All we are sure of is that the thief was dressed in corduroys like Tammas's, and that the coat he left behind him was a thin linen one, coarse, stained—though not torn—and apparently worthless. There were

twelve buttons on it—an unusual number, but not, as Tammas discovered, too many. It is a matter for regret that this coat was not preserved.

No doubt Tammas was shivering when he woke up, but all his minor troubles were swallowed in the loss of his top-coat, which was not only a fine one, but contained every penny he had in the world, namely, seven shillings and sixpence in a linen bag. He climbed into the Long Parks looking for the thief; he ran along the drain edge looking for him, and finally he sat down in dull despair. It was a cruel loss, and now not his indignation with Chirsty, but Chirsty's case against him, shook his frame.

"The first use I ever made of the linen coat," he allowed, "was to wipe the water off my een wi't."

Only fear of Chirsty can explain Haggart's next step, which was, after putting on the linen coat, to wander off by the Long Parks, instead of at once returning to Tillyloss.

I did not take William over the ground covered by Haggart during the next three days; indeed, the great part of it is only known to me by vague report. Tammas doubtless had no notion when he ran away, as one might

call it, from Chirsty, that he would sleep next night thirty miles from Thrums. At the back of the house of Auchtersmellie, however, he fell in with a wandering tailor, bound for a glen farm, where six weeks' work awaited him. He was not a man of these parts, but Tammas offered to walk a few miles with him, and ended by going the whole way. Of Haggart's experiences at this time I know much, but none of them is visible beside the surprising event that sent him homewards striding.

It takes one aback to think that Haggart might never have been a humorist had not one of the buttons fallen off his coat. The immediate effect of this was dramatic rather than humorous. The tailor picked up the button to sew it on to the coat again, but surprised by its weight had the curiosity to tear its linen covering with his scissors. Then he drew in his breath, extending his eyes and looking so like a man who would presently whistle with surprise that Haggart stooped forward to regard the button closely. Next moment he had snatched up the button with one hand and the coat with another, and was off like a racer to the tinkle of the starter's bell.

When beyond pursuit, Haggart sat down to

make certain that he was really a rich man. The button that had fallen off was a guinea—gold guineas we said in Thrums, out of respect for them—covered with cloth, and a brief examination showed that the eleven other buttons were of the same costly kind. One popular explanation of this mysterious affair is that the tramp who left this coat to Tammas had stolen it from some person unknown, without realizing its value. Who the owner was has never been discovered, but he was doubtless a miser, who liked to carry his hoard about with him unostentatiously. I have known of larger sums hidden by farmers in as unlikely places.

Before resuming his triumphal march home, Tammas pricked a hole in each of the buttons, to make sure of his fortune, and wasted some time in deciding that it would be safer to carry the guineas as they were than stowed away in his boots.

"Sometimes on the road home," he used to say, "I ran my head on a tree or splashed into a bog, for it's sair work to keep your een on twelve buttons, when they're all in different places. Lads, I watched them as if they were living things."

William and I crossed from the drain edge

to the hill, where the next scene in the drama was played. The hill is public ground to the north of Thrums, separated from it by the cemetery and a few fields. So steep is the descent that a heavy stone pushed from the south side of the hill-dyke might crash two minutes afterwards against the back walls of Tillyloss. The view from the hill is among the most extensive in Scotland, and it also exposes some dilapidated courts in Thrums that are difficult to find when you are within a few feet of them. Fifty years ago the hill was nearly covered with whins, and it is half hidden in them still, despite the life-work of D. Fittis.

For some reason that I probably never knew, we always called him D. Fittis, but tradition remembers him as the Whinslayer. At a time when neither William nor I was of an age to play smuggle, D. Fittis's wife lay dying far up Glen Quharity. Her head was on D. Fittis's breast, and the tears on her cheeks came from his eyes. There were no human beings within an hour's trudge of them, and what made D. Fittis gulp was that he must leave Betsy alone while he ran through the long night for the Thrums doctor, or sit with her till she died.

"Ye'll no leave me, Davie," she said.

"Oh, Betsy; if I had the doctor, ye might live."

Betsy did not think she could live, but she knew her man writhed in his helplessness, and she told him to go.

"Put on your cravat, Davie," she said, "and mind and button up your coat."

"Oh, but I'm loth to gang frae ye," he said when his cravat was round his neck and he stood holding Betsy's hand.

"God's with me, Davie, and with you," Betsy said, but she could not help clinging to him, and then D. Fittis cried, "Oh, blessed God, Thou who didst in Thy great wisdom make poor folk like me, in Thy hands I leave this woman, and oh, ye might spare her to me."

"Ay, but God's will be done," said Betsy. "He kens best."

It was not God's will that these two should meet again on this earth. At the schoolhouse, which was to become my home, D. Fittis found friends who hastened to his wife's side, and Craigiebuckle lent him a horse on which he galloped off to Thrums. But among the whins of the hill the horse flung him and broke his leg. D. Fittis tried to crawl the rest of the way, but he was found next morning in a

wild state among the whins, and he was never a sane man again. For the remainder of his life he had but one passion—to cut down the whins, and many a time, at early morn, at noon, and when gloaming was coming on, I have seen him busy among them with his scythe. They grew as fast as he could cut, but he had loving relatives to tend him, and was still a kindly harmless man, though his laugh was empty.

William and I waded through the whins to a hollow in the hill, known as the toad's hole. It was here that Haggart, returning boldly to Thrums four days after Chirsty had the last word, fell in with D. Fittis.

"He was cutting away at the whins," Tammas remembered, "and I dinna think that the whole time me and him spoke he ever raised his head; he was a terrible busy man, D. Fittis."

Haggart, big with his buttons, had, doubtless, as he approached the whinslayer, the bosom of a victorious soldier marching home to music. Nevertheless it has been noticed that the warrior, who thrives on battles, may, even in the hour of his greatest glory, be forever laid prone by a chimney can. For Tam-

mas Haggart, confident that a few minutes would see him in Tillyloss, was preparing a surprise that rooted him to the toad's-hole like a whin. I have a poor memory if I cannot remember Haggart's own words on this matter.

"I stood looking at D. Fittis for a while," he told me, "but I said nothing loud out, though the chances are I was pitying the stocky in my mind. Then I says to him in an ordinary voice, not expecting a dumfounding answer, I says, 'Ay, D. Fittis, and is there ony-thing fresh in Thrums;'

"He hacks away at the whins, but says he, 'The burial's this day.'

"'Man,' I says, 'so there's a funeral! Wha's dead?'

"'Ye ken fine,' says he, implying as the thing was notorious.

"'Na,' I says, 'I dinna ken. Wha is it?'

"'Weel,' says he, 'it's Tammas Haggart.'

Tammas always warned us here against attempting to realize his feelings at these monstrous words. "I dinna say I can picture my position now mysel'," he said, "but one thing sure. is that for the moment these buttons slipped clean out of my head. It was an eerie-like thing to see D. Fittis cutting away at the

whins after making such an announcement. A common death couldna have affected him less."

"‘Say wha’s dead again, D. Fittis,’ I cries, minding that the body was daft.

"‘Tammas Haggart,’ says he, with the utmost confidence.

"‘Man, D. Fittis,’ I says, with uncontrolled indignation, ‘ye’re a big liar.’

"‘Whaeveer ye are,’ says he, ‘I would lick ye for saying that if I could spare the time.’

"‘Whaeveer I am!’ I cries. ‘Very weel ye ken I’m Tammas Haggart.’

"‘Wha’s the liar now?’ says he.

"I was a sort of staggered at this, and I says sharp-like, ‘What did Tammas Haggart die of?’

"I thocht that would puzzle him, if it was just his daftness that made him say I was gone, but he had his cause of death ready. ‘He fell down the quarry,’ says he.

"Weel, lads, his confidence about the thing sickened me, and I says, ‘Leave these whins alone, D. Fittis, and tell me all about it.’

"‘I canna stop my work,’ he says, ‘but Tammas Haggart fell down the quarry four nichts since. Ou, it was in the middle of the nicht,

and all Thrums were sleeping when it was wakened by one awful scream. It wakened the whole town. Ay, a heap of folk set up sudden in their beds.'

"'And was that Tammas Haggart falling down the quarry?' I says, earnest-like, for I was a kind of awestruck.

"'It was so,' says he, tearing away in the whins.

"'They didna find the body, though,' I says, looking down on mysel' with satisfaction.

"'Ay,' says he, 'the masons found it the next morning, and there was a richt rush of folk to see it.'

"'Ye had been there?' I says.

"'I was,' says he, 'and so was the wifie as lives beneath me. She took her bairn too, for she said, "It'll be something for the little ane to boast about having seen when he grows bigger." Ay, man, it had been a mighty fall, and the face wasna recognizable.'

"'How did they ken, then,' says I, 'that it was Tammas Haggart?'

"'Ou,' says he at once, 'they kent him by his top-coat.'

"'Lads, of course I saw in a klink that the

man as stole my top-coat had fallen down the quarry and been mista'en for me. Weel, I nipped mysel' at that. It's an unco thing to say, but I admit I was glad to have this proof, as ye may call it, that it was really me as was standing in the toad's hole.

"'When did ye say the burial was?' I asked him.

"'It's at half three this day,' he says, 'and I'll warrant it's half three now, so if ye want to be sure ye're no Tammas Haggart ye can see him buried.'

"I took a long look at D. Fittis, and it's gospel I tell ye when I say I never liked him from that minute. Then I hurried up the hill to the cemetery dyke, and sat down on it. Lads, I sat there, just at the very corner, whaur they've since put a cross to mark the spot, and I watched my ain burial. Yes, there I sat for near an hour, me, Tammas Haggart, an ordinary man at that time, getting sich an experience as has been denied to the most highly edicated in the land. I'm no boasting, but facts is facts.

"I'm no saying it wasna a fearsome sight, for I had a terrible sinking at the heart, and a mortal terror took grip of me, so that I

couldna have got off that dyke except by falling. Ay, and when the grave was filled up and the mourners had dribbled away, I sat on with some uncommon thochts in my mind. It would be wearing on to four o'clock when I got up shivering, and walked back to whaur D. Fittis was working. There was a question I wanted to put to him.

“‘D. Fittis,’ I says, ‘was there ony of the Balribbie folk as visited Tammas Haggart’s wife in her affliction?’

“‘Ay,’ says the crittur, trying to break a supple whin with his foot, ‘the wifie as lives beneath me was in the house at Tillyloss when in walks a grand leddy.’

“‘So, so,’ I says, ‘and was Chirsty ta’en up like about her man being dead?’

“‘Ay,’ says D. Fittis, ‘she was greeting, but as soon as the grand woman comes in, Chirsty takes the wifie as lives beneath me into a corner and whispers to her.’

“‘D. Fittis,’ I says, sternly, ‘tell me what Chirsty Todd whispered, for muckle depends on it.’

“‘Weel,’ he says, ‘she whispered, “If the leddy calls the corpse ‘Jeames’ dinna conterdict her.’

"I denounced Chirsty in my heart at that, not being sufficient of a humorist to make allowance for women, and I says, just to see if the thing'was commonly kent, I says,

"'And wha would Jeames be?"

"'I dinna ken,' says D. Fittis, 'but maybe you're Jeames yerself', when ye canna be Tammas Haggart.'

"Lads, ye see now that it was D. Fittis as put it into my head to do what I subsequently did. 'Jeames,' I said, 'I'll be frae this hour,' and without another word I walked off in the opposite direction frae Thrums.

"I dinna pretend as it was Chirsty's behavior alone that sent me wandering through the land. I had a dread of that funeral for one thing, and for another I had twelve gold guineas about me. Moreover, the ambition to travel took hold of me, and I thocht Chirsty's worst trials was over at ony rate, and that she was used to my being dead now."

"But the well-wisher, Tammas?" we would say at this stage.

"Ay, I'm coming to that. I walked at a mighty stride along the hill and round by the road at the back of the three-cornered wood to near as far as the farm of Glassal, and

there I sat down at the roadside. I was beginning to be mair anxious about Chirsty now, and to think I was fell fond of her for all her exasperating ways. I was torn with conflicting emotions, of which the one said, 'Back ye go to Tillyloss,' but the other says, 'Ye'll never have a chance like this again.' Weel, I could not persuade mysel', though I did my best, to gang back to my loom and hand ower the siller to Chirsty, and so, as ye all ken, I compromised. I hurried back to the hill——"

"But ye've forgotten the cheese?"

"Na, listen: I hurried back to the hill, wondering how I could send a guinea to Chirsty, and I minded that I had about half a pound of cheese in my pouch, the which I had got at a farm in Glen Quharity. Weel, I shoved a guinea into the cheese, and back I goes to the hill to D. Fittis.

"'D. Fittis,' I says, 'I ken you're an honest man, and I want ye to take this bit of cheese to Chirsty Todd.'

"'Ay,' he says, 'I'll take it, but no till it's ower dark for me to see the whins.'

"What a busy critter D. Fittis was, and to no end! I left the cheese with him, and was off again, when he cries me back.

"'Wna will I say sent the cheese?' he asks. I considered a minute, and then I says, 'Tell her,' I says, 'that it is frae a well-wisher.'

"These were my last words to D. Fittis, for I was feared other folk might see me, and away I ran. Yes, lads, I covered twenty miles that day, never stopping till I got to Dundee."

It was Haggart's way, when he told his story, to pause now and again for comments, and this was a point where we all wagged our heads, the question being whether his assumption of the character of a well-wisher was not a clear proof of humor. "That there was humor in it," Haggart would say, when summing up, "I can now see, but compared to what was to follow, it was neither here nor there. My humor at that time was like a laddie trying to open a stiff gate, and even when it did squeeze past, the gate closed again with a snap. Ay, lads, just listen, and ye'll hear how it came about as the gate opened wide, never to close again."

"Ye had the stuff in ye, though," Look-aboutyou would say, "and therefore, I'm of opinion that ye've been a humorist frae the cradle."

"Little you ken about it," Haggart would answer. "No doubt I had the material of

humor in me, but it was raw. I'm thinking cold water and kail and carrots and a penny bone are the materials broth is made of?"

"They are, they are."

"Ay, but it's no broth till it boils?"

"So it's no. Ye're richt, Tammas."

"Weel, then, it's the same with humor. Considering me as a humorist, ye might say that when my travels began I had put mysel' on the fire to boil."

CHAPTER IV.

THE WANDERINGS OF HAGGART.

Not having a Haggart head on my shoulders I dare not attempt to follow the explorer step by step during his wanderings of the next five months. In that time he journeyed through at least one country, unconsciously absorbing everything that his conjurer's wand could turn to humor when the knack came to him. This admission he has himself signed in conversation.

"Ay," he said, "I was like a blind beggar in these days, and the dog that led me by a string was my impulses."

Most of us let this pass, with the reflection that Haggart could not have said it in his pre-humorous days, but Sneck Hobart put in his word.

"Ye were hardly like the blind beggar," he said, "for ye didna carry a tanker for folk to put bawbees in."

Sneck explained afterwards that he only spoke to give Haggart an opportunity. It was,

indeed, the way of all of us, when we saw an opening, to coax Tammas into it. So sportsmen of another kind can point out the hare to their dogs, and confidently await results.

"Ye're wrang, Sneck," replied Haggart.

As ever, before shooting his bolt, he then paused. His mouth was open, and he had the appearance of a man hearkening intensely for some communication from below. There were those who went the length of hinting that on these occasions something inside jumped to his mouth and told him what to say.

"Yes, Snecky," he said at last, "ye're wrang. My mouth was the tanker, and the folk I met had all to pay toll, as ye may say, for they dropped things into my mouth that my humor turns to as muckle account as though they were bawbees. I'm no sure——"

"There's no many things ye're no sure of, Tammas."

"And this is no one of them. It's just a form of expression, and if ye interrupt me again, Snecky Hobart, I'll say a sarcastic thing about you that instant. What I was to say was that I'm no sure but what a humorist

swallows everything whole that he falls in with."

The impossibility of telling everything that befell Haggart in his wanderings is best proved in his own words:

"My adventures," he said, "was so surprising thick that when I cast them over in my mind I'm like a man in a corn-field, and every stalk of corn an adventure. Lads, it's useless to expect me to give you the history of iika stalk. I wrax out my left hand, and I grip something, namely, an adventure; or I wrax out my right hand and grip something, namely, another adventure. Well, by keeping straight on in any direction we wade through adventures till we get out of the field, that is to say, till we land back at Thrums. Ye say my adventures sounds different on different nights. Precisely, for it all depends on which direction I splash off in."

Without going the length of saying that Haggart splashed more than was necessary, I may perhaps express regret that he never saw his way to clearing up certain disputed passages in his wanderings. I would, I know, be ill-thought of among the friends who survive him if I stated for a fact that he never reached London. There was a general wish

that he should have taken London in his travels, and if Haggart had a weakness it was his reluctance to disappoint an audience. I must own that he trod down his corn-field pretty thoroughly before his hand touched the corn-stalk called London, and that his London reminiscences never seemed to me to have quite the air of reality that filled his recollections of Edinburgh. Admitted that he confirmed glibly as an eye-witness the report that London houses have no gardens (except at the back), it remains undoubted that Craigiebuckle confused him with the question:—

“What do they charge in London for half-a-pound of boiling beef and a penny bone?”

Haggart answered, but after a pause, as if he had forgotten the price, which scarcely seems natural. However, I do not say that he was never in London, and certainly his curious adventures in it are still retailed, especially one with an ignorant policeman who could not tell him which was the road to Thrums, and another with the doorkeeper of the House of Parliament, who, on being asked by Haggart “How much was to pay?” foolishly answered, “What you please.”

But though I heartily approve the feeling in Thrums against those carping critics who

would slice bits off the statue which we may be said to have reared to Haggart's memory, some of the stories now fondly cherished are undoubtedly mythical. For instance, whatever Lookaboutyou may say, I do not believe that Haggart once flung a clod of earth at the Pope. It is perfectly true that some such story got abroad, but if countenanced by Haggart it was only because Chirsty had her own reasons for wanting him to stand well with the Auld Licht minister. Often Haggart was said in his own presence to have had adventures in such places as were suddenly discovered by us in the newspapers, places that had acquired a public interest, say, because of a murder; and then he neither agreed that he had been there nor allowed that he had not. Thus it is reasonable to believe that his less discriminating admirers splashed out of Haggart's corn-field into some other body's without noticing that they had crossed the dyke. His silence at those times is a little aggravating to his chronicler now, but I would be the first to defend it against detractors. Unquestionably the length of time during which Haggart would put his under lip over the upper one, and so shut the door on words, was one of the grandest proofs of his humor. However plentiful the water in

the dam may be, there are occasions when it is handy to let down the sluice.

I the more readily grant that certain of the Haggart stories may have been plucked from the wrong fields, because there still remain a sufficient number of authenticated ones to fill the mind with rapture. A statistician could tell how far they would reach around the world, supposing they were represented by a brick apiece, or how long they would take to pass through a doorway on each other's heels. We never attempted to count them. Being only average men we could not conveniently carry beyond a certain number of the stories about with us, and thus many would doubtless now be lost were it not that some of us loaded ourselves with one lot and others with another. Each had his favorites, and Haggart supplied us with the article we wanted, just as if he and we were on opposite sides of a counter. Thus when we discuss him now we may have new things to tell of him; nay, even the descendants of his friends are worth listening to on Haggart, for the stories have been passed on from father to son.

Some enjoyed most his reminiscences of how he felt each time he had to cut off another button.

"Lads," he said, "I wasna unlike a doctor. Ye mind Dr. Skene saying as how the young doctors at the college grew faint like at first when they saw blood gushing, but by and by they became so mighty hardy that they could off with a leg as cool as though they were just hacking sticks?"

"Ay, he said that."

"Well, that was my sensations. When I cut off the first button it was like sticking the knife into mysel', and I did it in the dark because I hadna the heart to look on. Ay, the next button was a stiff job too, but after that I grew what ye may call hard-hearted, and it's scarce going beyond the truth to say that a time came when I had a positive pleasure in sending the siller flying. I dinna ken, thinking the thing out calmly now, but what I was like a wild beast drunk with blood."

"What was the most ye ever spent in a week?"

"I could tell ye that, but I would rather ye wanted to ken what was the most I ever spent in a nicht."

"How muckle?"

"Try a guess."

"Twa shillings?"

"Twa shillings!" cried Haggart, with a con-

tempt that would have been severe had the coins been pennies; "ay, sax shillings is nearer the mark."

"In one nicht?"

"Ay, in one single nicht."

"Ye must have lost some of it?"

"Not a bawbee. Ah, T'nowhead, man, ye little ken how money goes in grand towns. Them as lives like lords must spend like lords."

"That's reasonable enough, but I would like to hear the price of ilka thing ye got that nicht?"

"And I could tell ye. What do ye say to a shilling and saxpence for a bed?"

"I say it was an intake."

"Of course it was, but I didna grudge it."

"Ye didna?"

"No, I didna. It was in Edinburgh, and my last nicht in the place, and also my last but-ton, so I thinks to mysel' I'll have one tremendous, memorable nicht, and then I'll go hame. Lads, I was a sort of wearying for Chirsty."

"Ay, but there's four shillings and saxpence to account for yet."

"There is so. Saxpence of it goes for a glass of whisky in the smoking-room. Lads, that smoking-room was a sight utterly baffling

imagination. There was no chairs in it except great muckle saft ones, a hantle safter than a chaff bed, and in ilka chair some nobleman or other with his feet up in the air. Ay, I a sort of slipped the first time I tried a chair, but I wasna to be beat, for thinks I, 'Lords ye may be, but I have paid one and sax for my bed as weel as you, and this nicht I'll be a lord too!' Keeping the one and sax before me made me bold, and soon I was sprawling in a chair with my legs sticking ower the arm with the best of them. Ay, it wasna so much enjoyable as awe-inspiring."

"That just brings ye up to twa shillings."

"Weel, there was another one and sax for breakfast."

"Astounding!"

"Oh, a haver, of course, but we got as muckle as we liked, and I assure ye it's amazing how much ye can eat, when ye ken ye have to pay for it at ony rate. Then there was ninepence for a luncheon."

"What's that?"

"I didna ken mysel' when I heard them speaking about it, but it turned out to be a grand name for a rabbit."

"Man, is there rabbits in Edinburgh?"

"Next there was threepence of a present to

the waiter-loon, and I finished up with a shilling's worth of sangwiches."

"Na, that's just five and saxpence."

Haggart, however, would not always tell how the remaining sixpence went. At first he admitted having squandered it on the theatre, but after he was landed by Chirsty in the Auld Licht kirk he withdrew this reminiscence, and put another sixpence-worth in the smoking-room in its place.

As a convincing proof of the size of Edinburgh, Haggart could tell us how he lost his first lodgings in it. They were next house to a shop which had a great show of vegetables on a board at the door, and Haggart trusted to this shop as a landmark. When he returned to the street, however, there were greengrocery shops everywhere, and after asking at a number of doors if it was here he lived, he gave up the search. This experience has been paralleled in later days by a Tilliedrum minister, who went for a holiday to London, and forgot the name of the hotel he was staying at; so he telegraphed to Tilliedrum to his wife, asking her to tell him what address he had given her when he wrote, and she telegraphed back to him to come home at once.

Like all the great towns Haggart visited,

Edinburgh proved to be running with low characters, with whom, as well as with the flower of the place—for he was received everywhere—he had many strange adventures. His affair with the bailie would make a long story itself, if told in full as he told it; also what he did to the piper; how he climbed up the Castle rocks for a wager; why he once marched indignantly out of a church in the middle of the singing; the circumstances in which he cut off his sixth button; his heroic defense of a lady who had been attacked by a footpad; his adventures with the soldier who was in love and had a silver snuffbox; his odd meeting with James Stewart, lawful King of Great Britain and Ireland. With this personage, between whom and a throne there only stood the constables, Haggart of Thrums hobnobbed on equal terms. The way they met was this. Haggart was desirous of the sensation of driving in a carriage, but grudged much outlay on an experience that would soon be over. He accordingly opened the door of a street vehicle and stepped in, when the driver was not looking. They had a pleasant drive along famous Princes Street and would probably have gone farther had not Haggart become aware that someone was hanging on behind. In his in-

dignation he called the driver's attention to this, which led to his own eviction. The hanger-on proved to be no other than the hapless monarch, with whom Haggart subsequently broke a button. For a king, James Stewart, who disguised his royal person in corduroys, was, as Haggart allowed, very ill in order. The spite of the authorities had crushed that once proud spirit, and darkened his intellect, and he took his friend to a gambling-house, where he nodded to the proprietor.

"Whether they were in company, with designs on my buttons," Haggart has said, "I'm not in a position to say, but I bear no ill-will to them. They treated me most honorable. Ay, the king, as we may call him if we speak in a low voice, advises me strong to gamble a button at one go, for, says he, 'You're sure to win.' Lads, it's no for me to say a word against him, but I thocht I saw him wink to the proprietor lad, and so I says in a loud voice, says I, 'I'll gamble half-a-crown first, and if I win, then I'll put down a button.' The proprietor a sort of nods to the king at that, and I plunks down my half-crown. Weel, lads, I won five shillings in a clink."

"Ay, but they were just waiting for your guineas."

"It may have been so, Andrew, but we have no proof of that; for, ye see, as soon as I got the five shillings and had buttoned it up in my pouch, I says, 'I'll be stepping hame now,' I says, and away I goes. Ye canna say but what they treated me honorable."

"They had looked thrawn?"

"Ou, they did; but a man's face is his own to twist it as he pleases."

"And ye never saw the king again?"

"Ay, I met him after that in a close. I gave the aristocratic crittur saxpence."

"I'll tell ye what, Tammass Haggart: if he was proclaimed king, he would very likely send for ye to the palace and make ye a knight."

"Man, Snecky, I put him through his catechism on that very subject, but he had no hope. Ye canna think how complete despondent he was."

"Ye're sure he was a genuine Pretender?"

"Na faags! But when ye're traveling it doesna do to let on what ye think, and I own it's a kind of satisfaction to me now to picture mysel' diddling a king out of five shillings."

"It's a satisfaction to everybody in Thrums, Tammass, and more particular to Tillyloss."

"Ay, Tilly has the credit of it in a manner

of speaking. And it was just touch and go that I didna do a thing with the siller as would have commemorated that adventure among future ages."

"Ay, man?"

"I had the notion to get bawbees for the money, namely, one hundred and thirty-twa bawbees, for of course I didna count the saxe-pence. Weel, what was I to do with them?"

"Put the whole lot in the kirk-plate the first Sabbath day after ye came back to Thrums?"

"Na, na. My idea was to present a bawbee to a hundred and thirty-twa folk in Thrums, so as they could keep it round their necks or in a drawer as a memento of one of their humble fellow-townsmen."

"No humble, surely?"

"Maybe no, but when ye do a thing in a big public way it's the proper custom to speak of yersel' as a puir crittur, and leave the other speakers to tell the truth about ye."

"It's a pity ye didna carry out that notion."

"Na, it's no, for I had a better ane after, the which I did carry out."

"Yea?"

"Ay, I bocht a broach to Chirsty with the siller."

"Ho, ho, that's whaur she got the broach?"

"It is so, and though I dinna want to boast, nobody having less need to do so, I can tell ye it was the biggest broach in Edinburgh at the price."

Edinburgh was only a corner in Haggart's field of corn, and from it I have not pulled half-a-dozen stalks. He was in various other great centers of adventure, and even in wandering between them he had experiences such as would have been a load for any ordinary man's luck. Once he turned showman, when the actors were paid in the pennies flung at them by admirers in the audience. Haggart made for himself a long blood-red nose, which proved such an irresistible target for moneyed sportsmen that the other players complained to the management. He sailed up canals swarming with monsters of the deep. He proved such an agreeable companion at farms that sometimes he had to escape in the night. He rescued a child from drowning and cowed a tiger by the power of the human eye, exactly as these things are done in a book which belonged to Chirsty. He had eleven guineas with him when he set out, and without a note-book he could tell how every penny of the money was spent. Prices, indeed, he remembered better than anything.

I might as well attempt to walk up the wall of a house as to cut my way through Haggart's corn-field. Before arriving at the field I thought to get through it by taking the buttons one by one, but here I am at the end of a chapter, and scarcely any of the corn is behind me. I now see that no biographer will ever be able to treat Haggart on the grand scale he demands; for humility will force those who knew him in his prime to draw back scared from the attempt, while younger admirers have not the shadow of his personality to warn them of their responsibility. For my own part, I publicly back out of the field, and sit down on the doctor's dyke awaiting Haggart's return to Thrums.

CHAPTER V.

THE RETURN OF HAGGART.

Haggart came home on a Saturday evening, when the water-barrels were running over, and our muddy roads had lost their grip. But at all times he took small note of the weather, and often said it was a fine day out of politeness to the acquaintances he met casually, when Tillyloss dripped in rain. To a man who has his loom for master it only occurs as an afterthought to look out at the window.

His shortest and natural route would have taken the wanderer to Tillyloss without zig-zagging him through the rest of Thrums, but he made a circuit of the town, and came marching down the Roods.

"I wanted to burst upon the place sudden like," he admitted, "and to let everybody see me. I dinna deny but what it was a proud moment, lads, as Thrums came in sight. I had naturally a sort of contempt for the placey, and yet I was fell awid to be back in it too, just as a body is glad to slip into his bed at

nicht. Ay, foreign parts is grand for adventure, but Thrums for company."

At the top of the Roods he was recognized by two boys who had been to a farm for milk, and were playing at swinging their flagon over their heads without dropping its contents. The apparition stayed the flagon in the air, and the boys clattered off screaming. Their father had subsequently high words with Tammas, who refused to refund the price of the milk.

"Though my expectations was high," Haggart said, "they were completely beaten by the reality. Nothing could have been more gratifying than the sensation I created, not only among ladies and lassies but among grown men and women. Very weel I ken that Dan'l Strachen pretends he stood his ground when I came upon him at the mouth of Saunders Rae's close, but whaur was the honor in that, when the crittur was paralyzed with fear? Ay, he wasna the only man that lost his legs in the Roods that day; Will'um Crewe being another. Snecky Hqbart, you was one of them as I walked into at Peter Lambie's shop door, and I'll never speak to ye again if ye dinna allow as I scattered ye like a showman in the square does when he passes round the hat."

"I allow, Tammas, as I made my feet my friend that night."

"And did I no send the women flying and skirling in all directions? Was it me or was it no me that made Mysy Dinnie faint on her back in the corner of the school-wynd?"

"It was you, Tammas, and mighty boastful the crittur was when she came to, and heard she had fainted."

"And there's a curran women as says they hung out at their windows looking at me. I would like to hear of one proved case in which ony woman did that except at a second story window?"

"Sal, they didna dare look out at low windows. Na, they were more like putting on their shutters."

"And did some of them no bar their doors, and am I lying when I say Lisbeth Whamand up with her bairn out of the cradle and ran to the door of the Auld Licht kirk, thinking I couldna harm her there?"

"You're speaking gospel, Tammas. And it wasna to be wondered at that we should be terrified, seeing we had buried ye five months before."

"I'm no saying it was unnatural. I would have been particular annoyed if ye had been

so stupid as to stand your ground. And what's more, if I had met the Auld Licht minister he would have run like the rest."

But this oft-repeated assertion of Haggart's was usually received in silence. His extraordinary imagination enabled him to conceive this picture, but to such a height we never rose.

By the time Haggart reached the Tenements the town had sufficiently recovered to follow him at a distance. How he looked to the populace has been frequently discussed, Peter Lambie's description being regarded as the best.

"Them of you," Peter would say, drawn to the door of his shop by Haggart groups, "as has been to the Glen Quharity Hieland sports, can call to mind the competition for best-dressed Hielander. The Hielanders stands in their glory in a row, and the grand leddies picks out the best-dressed one. Weel, the competitors tries to look as if they didna ken they were being admired, implying as they're indifferent to whether they get the prize or no, but, all the time, there's a sort of pleased smirk on their faces, mixed up with a natural anxiety. Ay, then, that's the look Tammas Haggart had when he passed my shop."

"But ye saw a change come over him, did ye no?"

"I did. I was among them as ran after him along the Tenements, and, though I just saw his back, it wasna the back he had on when he passed my shop. I would say, judging from his back, as his chest was sticking out, and he walked with a sort of strut, like the Hielander as has won the prize and kens it would be a haver to make pretence of modesty ony more."

"But ye never saw me look back, Peter," Haggart said, when Lambie's version was presented to him.

"Na, it was astonishing how ye could have kept frae turning your head. Ye was like one unaware that there was sich a crowd running after ye."

"Ay, lad, but very weel I went for all that. Thinks I to mysel' as I walks on before ye—"This scene winna be forgotten for many a year'."

"And it will not, Tammas. It did the work of the town for a nine days. Ay, I've often said mysel' that you walked hame that nicht more like a circus procession than a single man. The only think I a kind of shake my head at is your saying ye wasna a humorist at that time."

"I didna just gang that length, Pete. I was a humorist and I wasna a humorist. My humor

was just peeping out of its hole like a rabbit, as ye might say."

"Ye said as when ye started on your wanderings it was like putting yoursel,' considered as a humorist, on the fire to boil. Weel, then, I say as ye had come aboil when ye marched through Thrums."

"Na, Lookaboutyou, it's an ingenious argument that; but ye've shot ower the top of the target, lad. Ye've all seen water so terrible near the boil that if ye touch it with your finger it does begin to boil?"

"Ay, that's true; but a spoon is better to touch it with, in case you burn your finger."

Lookaboutyou got a laugh for this, which annoyed Tammas.

"Take care, Lookaboutyou," he said, warningly, "or I'll let ye see as my humor can burn too. I ken a sarcastic thing to say to ye, my man."

"But what about the water so near the boil?" asked Hobart, while Lookaboutyou shrunk back.

"My humor was in that condition," said Haggart, still eyeing the foolish farmer threateningly, "when I came back to Thrums. It just needed a touch to make it boil."

"And, sal, it got the touch!"

"Ay, I admit that; but no till the Monday."

We go back to the march from the Roods to Tillyloss. In less time than it would have taken Haggart to bring his sarcastic shaft from the depths where he stowed these things and fire it into Lookaboutyou, he had walked triumphantly to Tillyloss, and turned up the road that was presently to be named after him. His tail of fellow-townsmen came to a stop at the pump, where they had a good view of Haggart's house, all but a few daring ones, nearly all women, who ran up the dyke, in hope of witnessing the meeting with Chirsty.

"I suppose, lads," Haggart said to us, "that ye're thinking my arrival at Tillyloss was the crowning moment of my glóry?"

"It was bound to be."

"So ye think, Andrew; but that just shows how little ye ken about the human heart. I got as far as Tillyloss terribly windy at the way ye had honored me; but, lads, something came ower me at sight of that auld outside stair. Ay, it had a mighty hame-like look."

"I've heard tell ye stopped and gazed at it, like grand folk admiring the view."

"Ay, lathies, I daursay I did so; but it wasna the view I was thinking about. I'll war-

rant ye couldna say what was in my mind?"

"Your funeral?"

"I never gave it a thocht. Na, but I'll tell ye: I was thinking of Chirsty Todd."

"Ay, and the startle she was to get?"

"No, Snecky; it's an astonishing thing, but the moment my een saw that outside stair I completely lost heart, and frae being lifted up with pride, down goes my courage like a bucket in a well. Was it the stair as terrified me? Na, it was Chirsty Todd. Lads, I faced the whole drove of ye as bold as a king sitting down at the head of his tea table; but the thocht of Chirsty Todd brocht my legs to a stop. Ay, for all we may say to the contrary, is there a man in Thrums as hasna a kind of fear of his wife?"

At this question Haggart's listeners usually looked different ways.

"Lads," continued Tammass, "it ran through me suddenly, like a cold blast of wind—'What if Chirsty shouldna be glad to see me back?' and I regretted mighty that I hadna halved the guineas with her. Ay, I tell ye openly, as I found mysel' getting smaller, like a gas-ball with a hole in it, and I a kind of lost sight of all I had to boast of. I was ashamed of mysel' and also in mortal terror of Chirsty

Todd. Ay, but I never let her ken that: na, na; a man has to be wary about what he tells his wife."

"He has so, for she's sure to fling it at him by and by like a wet clout. Women has terrible memories for what ye blurt out to them."

"Ye're repeating my words, Rob, as if they were your own; but what ye say is true. Women doesna understand about men's minds' being profounder than theirs, and consequently waur to manage."

"That's so, and it's a truth ye daurna mention to them. But ye was come to the outside stair, Tammas."

"Ay, I was. Lads, I climbed that stair all of a tremble, and my hand was shaking so muckle that for a minute I couldna turn the handle of the door."

"We saw as ye a sort of tottered."

"Ay, I was uneasy; and even when the door opened I didna just venture inside. Na, I had a feeling as it was a judicious thing to keep a grip of the door. Weel, lathies, I stood there keeking in, and what does I see but Chirsty Todd sitting into the fire, with my auld pipe in her mouth. Ay, there she sat blasting."

"How did that affect ye, Tammas?"

"How did it affect me? It angered me most mighty to see her enjoying hersel', and me thocht to be no more."

"'Ye heartless limmer,' I says to mysel', and that reminds me as a man is master in his own house, so I bangs the door to and walks in."

"Wha spoke first?"

"Oh, I spoke first. I spoke just as her een lichted on me."

"Ye had said a memorable thing?"

"I canna say I did. No, Pete. I just gave her a sly kind of look, and I says, 'Ay, Chirsty.' "

"She screamed, they say?"

"She did so, and the pipe fell from her mouth. Ay, it's a gratification to me to ken that she did scream."

"And what happened next?"

"She spyed at me suspiciously; and says she, 'Tammag Haggart, are you in the flesh?' to which I replies, 'I am so, Chirsty.' 'Then,' cries she sharply, 'take your dirty feet off my clean floor!'"

"And did ye?"

"Ay, I put them on the fender; and she cries, 'Take your dirty feet off the fender.'"

"Lads, I thocht it was best to sing small,

so I took off my boots, and she sat glowering at me, but never speaking. 'Ay, Chirsty,' I says, 'ye've had rain I'm thinking; and she says, 'The rain's neither here nor there; the question is, How did you break out?' Ay, the critter thocht I had broken out of my grave."

"We all thocht that."

"Nat'rally ye did. Weel, I began my story at the beginning, but with the impatience of a woman she aye said, 'I dinna want to hear that, I want to ken how you broke out!'"

"But she wanted to hear about the siller in the buttons?"

"Ay, but I tried to slither ower the buttons, fearing she would be mad at me for spending them. And, losh, mad she was! I explained to her as I put them to good use by improving my mind, but she says, 'Dinna blather about your mind to me, or I'll take the poker to ye!' Chirsty was always fond of language."

"But what about the Well-wisher?"

"Oh, that was a queery, I says to Chirsty, 'I did not forget your sufferings, Chirsty, for I'm the Well-wisher.' At first she didna understand, but then she minds and says, 'It was you as sent that bit cheese with D. Fittis, was it?' Lads, then it came out as the cheese

was standing in the press untouched. Ay, I tore it in twa with my hands, and out rolls the guinea. She had never dreamed of there being siller in the cheese."

"Na, she was terrified to touch the cheese. I mind when I could have bocht it fae her for twa or three bawbees. Ay, what chances a body misses. But she had been pleasanter with ye after she got the guinea?"

"I can hardly say that. She nipped it up quick, and tells me to go on with my story. Weel, I did so in a leisurely way, her aye nagging at me to come to the quarry, as I soon had to do. I need scarce tell ye she was mighty surprised it wasna me ye buried, but after that was cleared up, I saw her mind wasna on what I was saying to her. No, lads, I was the length of Dundee in my story when she jumps up, and away she goes to the lowest shelf in the dresser. I stopped in my talk and watched her. She pulls out the iron and lays it on the table, then she shoves a heater into the fire, and brings an auld dicky out of a drawer. Lads, I had a presentiment what she was after."

"'What are ye doing, Chirsty?' I says with misgivings.

"'I'm to iron a dicky for ye to wear to-

morrow,' she cries, and she kicks my foot off the fender.

"'I'm no going to the kirk,' I warns her.

"'Are ye no?' says she; 'ye gang twice, Tammas Haggart, though the Auld Licht minister has to drive ye to the door with a stick.'

"Ay, when I heard she had joined the Auld Lichts I kent I was done with lazy Sabbaths. Weel, she ironed away at that dicky with tremendous energy, and then all at once she lays down the iron and she cries,

"'Keeps us all, I had forgotten!' She was the picture of woe.

"'What's the matter, Chirsty?' I says.

"She stood there wringing her hands.

"'Ye canna gang to the kirk,' she moans, 'for ye have no clothes.'

"'No clothes!' I cries. 'I have my blacks.'

"'They're gone,' she says.

"'Gone, ye limmer!' I says, 'wha has them?'

"'Davit Whamand,' she says, 'has the coat, and Hender Haggart the waistcoat and the hat.'

"Ay, lads, I can tell ye this composedly now, but I was fuming at the time. Chirsty's passion for genteelity was such that she had imitated grand folk's customs and given away the clothes as had been worn by the corpse."

"That came of taking a wife frae Balribbie."

"Ay, and it's not the only proof of Chirsty's vanity, for, as ye all ken, she continued to wear her crape to the kirk long after I came back."

"Because she thocht it set her?"

"Ou, rather, just because she had it. But it was aggravating to me to have to walk with her to the kirk, and her in widow's crapes. It would have provoked an ordinary man to the drink."

"It would so, but what said ye when ye heard the blacks was gone?"

"Said? It wasna a time for saying. I shoved my feet into my boots and flung on my bonnet, and hurries to the door."

"'Whaur are ye going?' cries Chirsty."

"'To demand back my blacks,' I says, dashing open the door with my fist. Ye may mind there was some of ye keeking in at the door and the window, trying to hearken to the conversation."

"Ay, and we flew frae ye as if ye was the Riot Act. But we was thinking by that time as ye micht be a sort of living."

"Maybe, but I wasna thinking about you. Na, it was the blacks as was on my mind, and away I goes."

"Ye ran."

"Yes, I ran straight to the Tenements to Davit Whamand's house. Lads, I said the pot was very near the boil when I marched down the Roods, but my humor was getting cold again. Ay, Chirsty Todd had suddenly lifted the pot off the fire."

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH A BIRTH IS RECORDED.

"DAVIT'S collie barked at me," Haggart continued, "when it heard me lifting the sneck of the door, but I cowed it with a stern look, and stepped inside. The wife was away cracking about me to Lizzie Linn, but there was Davit himsel' with a bantam cock on his knee, the which was ailing, and he was forcing a little butter into its nib. He let the beast fall when he saw me, and I was angered to notice as he had been occupied with a bantam when he should have been discussing me with consternation."

"It was the greater surprise to him when in ye marched."

"Ay, but my desire to be thocht a ghost had gone, and I says at once, 'Dinna stand trembling there, Davit Whamand,' I says, 'for I'm in the flesh, and so you'll please hand ower my black coat!' He hardly believed I was human at first, but at the mention of the coat he grows stiff and hard, and says he, 'What black coat?'

“‘Deception will not avail ye, Davit Whamand,’ says I, ‘for Chirsty has confessed all.’

“‘The coat’s mine,’ says Davit, glowering.

“‘I want that coat direct,’ I says.

“‘Think shame o’ yoursel,’ says he, ‘and you a corpse this half year.’

“The crittur tried to speak like a minister, but I waved away his argument with my hand.

“‘Back to the cemetery, ye shameless corp,’ says he, ‘and I’ll mention this to nobody; but if ye didna gang peaceably we’ll call out the constables.’

“‘Dinna haver, Davit Whamand,’ I retorts, ‘for ye ken fine I’m in the flesh, and if ye dinna produce my coat immediately I’ll take the law of ye.’

“‘Will ye?’ he sneers; ‘and what micht ye call yoursel’?’

“‘I’ll call mysel’ by my own name, namely, Tammas Haggart,’ I thunders.

“‘Yea, yea,’ says he; ‘I’m thinking a corp hands on his name to his auldest son, and Tammas Haggart being dead without a son the name becomes extinct.’

“Lads, that did stagger me a minute, but then I minds I’m living, and I cries, ‘Ye sly crittur, I’m no dead.’

“‘Are ye not?’ says he; ‘I think ye are.’

“‘Do I look dead?’ I argues.

“‘Look counts for nothing before a bailie,’ says he, ‘and if ye annoy me I’ll bring witnesses to prove you’re dead. Yes, I’ll produce the widow in her crapes, and them as confined ye.’

“‘Ay,’ I cries, ‘but I’ll produce mysel’.

“‘The waur for you,’ says he, ‘for if ye try to overthrow the law we’ll bury ye again, though it should be at the public expense.’

“‘Lads, that made me uneasy, and all I could think to do was just to fling out my foot at the bantam.

“‘Ye daur look me in the face, Davit Whamand,’ I says, ‘and pretend as I’m no mysel’?

“‘I daur do so,’ he says; ‘and not on’y are ye no yersel’, but I would never have recognized ye for such.’

“‘So, so,’ I remarks; ‘and ye refuse to deliver up my coat?’

“‘Yes,’ he says, ‘and what’s more I never had your coat.’

“‘Lads, that was his cautiousness in case twa lines of defense was needed before the bailie; but I said no more to him, for now the house began to fill with folk wanting to make sure of me, and I was keen to convince them I was

in the flesh before Davit prejudiced them. Ay, Robbie, you was one of them as convoyed me to Hender Haggart's."

"I was, Tammas, and when ye shut the door on me a mask of folk came round me to hear how ye had broke out."

"I daursay that, but their curiosity didna interest me now. Ye mind when we got to Hender's house it was black and dark, him pretending to be away to his bed? Ay, but the smell of roasting potatoes belied that. As we ken now, Hender had been warned that I was at Davit's demanding back the coat, and he suspected I would come next to him for the waistcoat and the hat."

"Ay, but he had to let ye in."

"Ou, I would have broken in the door rather than have been beat, and in the tail of the day Hender takes the snib off the door."

"He pretended he thocht ye a ghost too, did he no?"

"No, no, that's a made up story. Hender and his wife had agreed to pretend that, but when Hender came to the door he became stupid-like, and when I says 'Ay, Hender,' he says 'Ay, Tammas.' I've heard his wife raged at him about it after.

"'Nanny,' I says to the wife, 'it's me back

again, and ye'll oblige by handing ower my waistcoat and my hat.'

"I've forgotten to tell ye that when I walked in, Nanny was standing on a stool with a poker in her hand, the which she was using to shove something on the top of the press out of sight. She jumped down hurriedly, but looking bold, and says she, 'These mice is very troublesome.'

"Weel, I had a presentiment, and I says, 'Give me the poker, Nanny, and I'll get at the mice!' Says she, 'Na, na'; and she lifts away the stool.

"All this time Hender had been looking very melancholy, but despite that, he was glad to see me back, and he says in a sentimental way, 'You're a stranger, Tammas,' says he.

"'I am, Hender,' says I, 'and I want my waistcoat, also my hat.'

"Hender gave a confused look to the wife, and says she, 'The waistcoat has been sold for rags, and I gave the hat to tinklers.'

"'Hender Haggart,' says I, 'is this so?'

"Hender a sort of winked, meaning that we could talk the thing ower when Nanny wasna there, but I couldna wait.

"'I think, Nanny,' says I, pointedly, 'as I'll take a look at these mice of yours.'

"'Ye'll do no sich thing,' says she.

"‘I’m thinking,’ says I, ‘as I’ll find a black waistcoat on the top of that press, and likewise a Sabbath hat.’

"Hender couldna help giving me an admiring look for my quickness, but Nanny put her back to the press, and says she, ‘Hender, am I to be insulted before your face?’

"Hender was perplexed but he says to me, ‘Ye hear what Nanny says, Tammas?’

"‘Ay,’ I says, ‘I hear her.’

"‘He hears ye, Nanny,’ says Hender.

"‘But I want my lawful possessions,’ I cries.

"Hender hesitated again, but Nanny repeats, ‘Hender, am I to be insulted before your face?’

"‘Dinna insult her before my face,’ Hender whispers to me.

"‘I offer no insult,’ I says, loud out, ‘but I’ve come for my waistcoat and my hat, and I dinna budge till I get them.’

"‘Ye’ve a weary time before ye, then,’ says Nanny.

"‘I wonder ye wouldna be ashamed to keep a man frae his belongings,’ I said.

"‘Tell him they’re yours, Hender,’ she cries.

"‘Ye see, Tammas,’ says Hender, ‘she says they’re mine.’

"‘Ay,’ I says ‘but ye canna pretend they’re yours yoursel’, Hender?’

"'Most certainly ye can, Hender,' says Nanny.

"'Ye see that, Tammas,' says Hender, triumphant.

"'And how do ye make out as they are yours?' I asks him.

"'Tell him,' cries Nanny, 'as ye got them for helping in his burial.'

"'Tammas,' says Hender, 'that's how I got them.'

"'Maybe,' I says, 'but did I give ye them?'

"'Say he was a corp,' Nanny cries.

"'Meaning no disrespect, Tammas,' says Hender, 'ye was a corp.'

"'How could I have been a corp,' I argues, 'when here I am speaking to ye?'

"Hender turned to Nanny for the answer to this, but she showed him her back, so he just said in a weak way, 'We'll leave the minister to settle that.'

"'Hender, ye gowk,' I says, 'ye ken I'm living; and if I'm living I'm no dead.'

"Lads, I regretted I hadna put it plain like that to Davit Whamand. However, Hender hadna the clear-headedness necessary to follow out sich reasoning, and he replies,

"'No doubt,' he says, 'ye are living in a sense, but no in another sense.'

"'I wasna the corp,' I cried.

“‘Weel, weel, Tammas,’ says he, in a fell dignified voice, ‘we needna quarrel on a matter of opinion.’

“I was just beginning to say as it was more likely to be the waistcoat we would fall out about, when in walks Chirsty in the most flurried way.

“‘Tammas Haggart,’ she pants, ‘come hame this instant; the minister’s waiting for ye.’

“Which minister?” I asks.

“‘None other,’ she says, looking proudly at Nancy, ‘than the Auld Licht minister.’

“Lads, I shook in my boots at that, and I says, ‘I winna come till I’ve got my hat and my waistcoat.’

“‘What,’ screams Chirsty, ‘ye daur to keep the minister waiting!’ and she shoved me clean out of the house.”

What the minister said to Haggart is not known for Tammas never divulged the conversation. Those who remained on the watch said that the minister looked very stern when walking back to the manse, and that Chirsty found her husband tractable for the rest of the evening. The most we ever got out of Tammas on the subject was that though he had met many terrifying folk in his wanderings, they were a herd of sheep compared to

the minister. He had sometimes to be enticed out of the reverie into which thought of the minister plunged him.

"So it was next day ye dandered up to the grave?" we would say craftily, though well aware that he did not leave the house till Monday.

"Na, na, not on the Sabbath day. When I wakened in the morning I admit I was terribly anxious to see the grave, as was natural, but thocht of the minister cowed me. I would have ventured as far as the grave if I had been able to persuade mysel' I wasna going for pleasure, but pleasure it was, lads. Ay, there was no denying that."

"Chirsty was at the kirk?"

"She was so, and in her widow's crapes. I watched her frae the window. Ay, it's no everybody as has watched his own widow."

"Na, and it had been an impressive spectacle. How would ye say she looked, Tammas?"

"She looked proud, Robbie."

"She would; but what would ye say she was proud of?"

"Ah, Robbie, there you beat me. But I can tell ye what she was proud of on the Monday."

"What?"

"Before porridge-time no less than seven

women, namely, three frae Tillyloss, twa frae the Tenements, and twa frae the Roods, chaps at the door and invites her to a dish of tea. That's what she was proud of, and I would like to hear of ony other woman in this town, single or married or a widow, as has had seven invitations to her tea in one day."

"The thing's unparalleled; but of course it was to hear about you that they speired her?"

"Oh, of course, and also to get out of her what the minister said to me. Ay, but can ony of ye tell me what's the memorablist thing about these invitations?"

"I dinna say I can, but it's something about the grave."

"It's this, Snecky, that before Chirsty had made up her mind whether to risk seven teas in one day, I had become a humorist for life."

"Man, man, oh, losh!"

"Ay, and it's perfectly appalling to consider as she was so excited about her invitations that when I came down frae the cemetery she never looked me in the face, and I had to say to her, 'Chirsty Todd, do ye no see as something has come ower me?' At that she says, 'I notice you're making queer faces, but I dinna ken what they mean.' 'They mean, Chirsty Todd,' says I, 'as I am now a humor-

ist,' to which she replies, 'Pick up that dish-clout.' "

"Keep us all! But oh, man, a woman's mind doesna easily rise to the sublime."

"It doesna, Pete, and Ill tell ye the reason; it's because of women, that is to say, richt-minded women, all having sich an adoration for ministers."

"I dinna contradict ye, Tammas, but surely that's a fearsome statement. Is ministers not nearer the sublime than other folk?"

"They are, they are, and that's just it. Ministers, ye may say, it always half road up to the sublime. Weel, what's the result? Women raises their een to gaze upon the sublime, when they catch sight of the minister, and canna look ony higher."

"Sal, Tammas, you've solved it! But I warrant ye couldna have said that till ye became a humorist?"

"No more than you could have said it yersel', Robbie."

"Na, I dinna pretend I could have said it, and even though I was to gang hame now and say it in your very words, it wouldna have the same show as when you say it."

"It would not, for ye would just blurt it out, but them as watches me saying a humor-

ous thing notices the mental struggle before the words comes up. Ay, the mental struggle's like the servant in grand houses as puts his head in at the door and cries, 'Leddies and gentlemen, take your seats, for the dinner is all but ready.' "

Early on Monday morning Haggart, the non-humorist, woke for the last time. The day was moderately fine, but gave no indication that anything remarkable was about to happen. Lookaboutyou, it is true, says that he noticed a queer stillness in the air, and Snecky Hobart spoke of an unusually restless night. It is believed by some that the cocks of Tillyloss did not crow that morning. But none of these phenomena were noticed until it became natural to search the memory for them, and Haggart himself always said that it was a common day. The fact, I suppose, is that an uncommon day was not needed, for here was Haggart and there was the cemetery. Nature never wastes her materials.

Haggart was elated no doubt, but so would any man have been in the circumstances. For the last time Haggart, the non-humorist, put off cleaning his boots for another day. For the last time he combed his hair without studying the effect in the piece of glass that

was glued to the wall. Never again would the Haggart who briskly descended his outside stair, forgetting to shut the door, enter that room in which Chirsty was already baking bannocks. It was a new Haggart who would return presently, Haggart of Haggart's Roady, Haggart of Thrums, in short, Haggart the humorist.

The last person to speak to Haggart, the non-humorist, was James Spens, the last to see him was Sanders Landels. Jamie met him at the foot of Tillyloss, and Sanders passed him on the burying-ground brae. Both were ordinary persons, and they never distinguished themselves again.

It was not his grave that made Haggart a humorist, but the gravestone. Two years earlier he had erected a tombstone to the memory of his relatives, but it had never struck him that he would some day be able to read his own fate on it. The grave is to the right of the entrance to the cemetery, almost exactly under the favorite seat known as the Bower, and being at the bend of the path it comes suddenly into view. Haggart walked eagerly along the path, an ordinary man upon the whole; then all at once . . . He looked . . . He

looked again. This is what he read:

THIS STONE WAS ERECTED BY
THOMAS HAGGART
TO THE MEMORY OF PETER HAGGART,
FATHER OF THE SAID THOMAS,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE, JAN. 7, 1825.
ALSO HERE LIES JEAN LINN, OR HAGGART,
MOTHER OF THE SAID THOMAS,
DIED 1828.
ALSO JEAN HAGGART,
SISTER OF THE SAID THOMAS,
DIED 1829.
ALSO ANDREW HAGGART,
BROTHER OF THE SAID THOMAS,
DIED 1831.
ALSO THE SAID THOMAS HIMSELF,
DIED 1834.

Haggart sat down on the grave. In Thrums common folk were doing common things—weaving, feeding the hens, supping porridge, carting peats.

Haggart sat on the grave. In Thrums they were thinking of their webs, of their dinner, of well-scrubbed floors, of their love affairs.

But Haggart sat on the grave, and a pot began to boil. He has told us what happened. Down in his inside something was roaring, and every moment the noise increased. He breathed

with difficulty. He was as a barrel swelling but held in by hoops of iron. He rose to his feet, for his tongue was hot and there was a hissing in his throat, and the iron hoops pressed more and more tightly. Suddenly the hissing ceased, and he stood as still as salt. The roaring far down died away. All at once he was tilted to the side, the hoops burst, and he began to laugh. The pot was boiling. Haggart was a humorist.

As soon as he realized what had happened Haggart returned to Tillyloss. The first to see him was Tibbie Robbie, the first to speak to him was William Lamb, the first to notice the change was Snecky Hobart.

I only undertook to tell how Haggart became a humorist, and here therefore my story ends. I have shown how a lamp was lit in Thrums, but not how it burned. Perhaps if I followed Haggart to his end, as I should like to do, to the time when the lamp flickered and a room in the Tenements grew dark, some who have smiled at an old man's tale would leave a tear behind them to a weaver's memory.

"Na," Haggart often said, "we winna touch the gravestone. It'll come in handy some day."

His humor, appetizing from the first, ripened with the years. For a time this was his com-

ment on the tombstone—:

“Lads, lads, what a do we’re preparing for posterity.”

Later in his life he said,

“It’s almost cruel to cheat future generations in this way.”

His hair was white before he said,

“I dinna ken but what I should do the honest thing, and have the date rubbed out.”

And when there was a squeal in his voice, he could add,

“No that it much matters.”





